

OF BRITISH GUIANA

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which the crops are planted in the ashes among the stumps and charred logs (Plate 5, b). The field is usually ready to burn about three weeks after the start of the dry season and is allowed to burn for about a week. In the planting women assist the men. Two implements are used, the hoe (sambá) of iron, which is obtained in trade, and the digging stick, which is merely a long pole three to four inches in diameter and five to eight feet long with a sharpened end. The latter implement is held in both hands and driven repeatedly into the ground to make a hole in which to plant such things as plantain. The hoe is used for loosening the ground preparatory to planting cassava shoots, maize, and similar crops. Cassava of the "bitter" or "poisonous" variety (*Manihot utilisima*) is the staple vegetable product of the Caribs. It is propagated by inserting young sticks cut from mature cassava plants into the ground at an angle. Each stick must have several shoots or buds and must show milk when it is cut. Cassava growing in the field is known as mainyá; the root of the cassava is called kiédi; and baked cassava bread ready to eat is arépa. After planting, the young cassava is weeded for a few weeks, following which it requires no further care until the roots are ready to be dug, which usually is the case after about nine months. The weeding is done by women and children. Cassava is a perennial which will produce a second crop without further attention. The third crop is usually poor because of exhaustion of the soil.

The roots are pulled up or are dug with hoes by the women, who usually go to the field every two or three days to replenish their supplies. They are placed in walishas (a type of carrying basket) and brought back to the house, where they are first washed free of earth with water brought from the creek in a calabash or pot. Then they are peeled or scraped to remove the bark-like skin (Plate 6, a). This process is called ipityali (I scrape cassava). The white peeled roots are then washed again (Plate 7, a) and grated (Plate 6, b). The graters now used are made of tin perforated with a pattern of concentric circles of small holes punched with a nail (Plate 7, b). The obverse surface of the perforated tin is rough and is bent over a log into a convex shape much like a larger edition of the tin nutmeg grater which is used in American kitchens. The graters average about eighteen by eight inches, and when in use are fitted onto the convex surface of a

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largest and juiciest; ekupu, slightly smaller than the preceding type; toshiare, long and thin, the sweetest of the four types; kuyarimyo, longer, thinner, and slightly sourer than toshiare. In planting, shoots are taken from the roots of mature plants and put in holes made in the ground with the digging stick. The plant bears in about a year after planting. The fruit is picked when it is yellow, and the skin removed with a knife. The fruit is mostly used to make an alcoholic drink called tanemu, the pulp being grated into a juicy mash and allowed to set for several days after having been mixed with water. Occasionally the ungrated fruit is eaten raw. [273]

Three varieties of yams (napoi)¹ are known to the Caribs; apotonongnapoi, the large white yam; tawimididishye, the small white yam; tupununapoi, the purple yam. They may be planted at any time of year and ripen in ten to eleven months, i.e. when the leaves die. For food they are eaten boiled, after being peeled. A drink, napoishuru, is also made from yams, as described in the chapter on stimulants. [252]

Tanyas and eddoes are also grown in the fields and are boiled in the pot after being peeled.

Sugar cane grows in every field. It is planted by inserting a shoot into a small hill of loose earth. It is eaten as a confection, being chewed like a stick of candy after the outside bark has been removed. The juice is also expressed in the cane mill (Plate 8, b) and used as an ingredient in cassiri and other alcoholic drinks.² [273]

Two types of "punkin" or squash (wayoma) are to be found in Carib fields: apotono wayomo, large and spherical; takunshishe wayomo, long and thin, with flesh drier and of superior flavor. The squash is planted from seed and bears in three months. As soon as the fruit is ripe the seeds are planted again so that a relatively continuous supply will be on hand all the year around. The squash is eaten only boiled; it is never dried or made into bread or cake. 244 824 252

Maize (awashi) of red (kuwata) and white (tamuneng awashi) varieties is raised. The seed is planted in small hills made with the hoe. While still green, the corn may be roasted on the cob in the husks; the ear is simply stuck among the hot ashes of a fire. When ripe, the kernels are removed from the cob with the hands 243 824 252

¹ *Dioscorea* sp.

² For a discussion of the probable introduction of this type of cane mill by negroes and for its distribution in South America, see Nordenskiöld, 1930, *Modifications of Indian Culture through Inventions and Loans*.

252 and pounded in a wooden mortar with a wooden pestle to make
243 corn meal (awashi apopo). This meal may be mixed with cane
juice and baked into a cake on the pan or it may be boiled and
eaten hot like porridge.

245 Limes (idiyoma) are grown in the fields. The seeds are scat-
[272] tered on the ground and seedlings replanted. Lime juice is mixed
with water to make a sort of limeade. Bina plants (see section on
Religion) are also grown in the fields.

[757] The papaiya (*Carica papaya*) is grown in fields and also in house
clearings. The fruit is eaten raw when ripe. In the green state the
rind is boiled and considered a good regulator for stomachic
troubles. The leaves are sometimes dried and rolled into cigarettes,
249 alone or with tobacco leaves. Tobacco plants are grown from seed-
lings in the agricultural fields. (See section on Stimulants.)

In addition to the foregoing food products, the kraua grass
plant is grown in the fields. The leaves of this plant resemble
those of the pineapple and, as stated heretofore, are shredded so
that the fibre may be used in making cord and string. It is planted
from suckers in the same way as the pineapple.

244 Under the head of agriculture must be considered three other
263 species of plants which are grown, not in the agricultural fields
proper, but in the clearing which surrounds the house. The pepper
(pawmi)¹ is an important part of the Carib menu and together
with cassarip furnishes the only condiment, with the exception of
occasional trade salt, which is used by the natives. Five varieties

[824] of pepper are cultivated: poroporo, big, round, red, very hot;
kawnamu, small, green; sidimya, very small and red; yanakatu,
long, thin, and green; arapo, long, green (creole, lady finger).
They are planted from seeds in holes made with a stick. They are
cooked with meat and vegetables in the pepper pot, and are also
eaten raw as garnishing in sandwiches of meat or fish and cassava
[757] bread. As a remedy for headache a feather is rubbed in the pulp
of a pepper and drawn across the eyes. Pepper juice is dropped in
276 the eyes for headaches. Aremi emu (magicians) drink a mixture
of pepper juice and water to induce the psychic state necessary for
communication with the supernatural powers.

244 The calabash bushes are a familiar shrub in all house clearings
824 (kwa'i, calabash; kwa'yepwi, calabash bush). Four types of

¹ *Capsicum* sp.

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244 calabash are cultivated: a, apotonong kwa'yepwi, large, spherical
 824 in shape except for small "spout" near the stem, grows on ground
 vine; b, morutuku, long, like a water melon, grows on ground vine
 like a melon; c, pawsi, small and elongated, grows on bush; d, shi'-
 iyongkwa'imyako epu, small and globular, grows on bush. Types
 a and b are planted from seed. They are perennial. Types c and
 d are planted from shoots cut from a living bush. The vines bear
 412 in seven months, the bush types in a year and a half. The pap
 226 from the inside of the fruit is sometimes used as fish bait and is
 262 sometimes cooked as a vegetable, but the principal use to which
 the fruits are put is in dried form as vessels for liquids. (See
 section on Utensils.) An interesting example of sympathetic
 789 magic is the practise of tying to the calabash plants the shells of
 the large landsnail, which in shape and color often resemble a small
 calabash. This practise is held to insure a good yield from the
 plant.

248 The cotton (maru'epu) trees are also planted near the houses.
 They are planted from seed and reach a height of eight to ten feet.
 They are said to bear in four to five months. Only one variety is
 grown. The seeds are removed by hand from the cotton bolls
 and are not used for any other purpose.

222 A large number of foods are gathered from the forest in season.
 262 The following is only a partial list of the edible bush products.
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Plums (mope)¹ — bear once a year, about January; round and greenish
 in color; eaten raw and boiled.

Waiti — fruit in a pod like beans, grows on tree; seeds surrounded by sweet
 velvety meat; three varieties: paidyowa, long pod; posindyo, small short pod,
 grows along river banks; anakara, broad stubby pod. The seeds are sucked,
 but the fruit has little food value.

Asipoko — a round reddish fruit with soft tart flesh.

Arawiya — plum-like fruit.

Sawari nuts (*Caryocar* [*Pekea*] *tuberculosa*) — the Brazil nut of commerce.

Mora seed (*Dimorphandra mora* Bth.) — in times of scarcity grated and
 baked into bread, sometimes mixed with cassava.

Greenheart seed (*Nectandra rodioei* Hooker) — same use as mora seed.

Ballimanni seeds (?sp.) usually eaten by accouri and labba, but used by
 man in time of want.

Cashew nuts (*Anacardium* sp.).

The fruit of the kokerite palm (*Maximiliana regia*).

Fruit of the ite palm (*Mauritia flexuosa*).

¹?*Spondias lutea*.